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ABSTRACT

Staff members working in early childhood services have enormous potential to influence young children's developing attitudes toward cultural diversity and gender equity. This issue of the Australian Early Childhood Association Research in Practice Series focuses on how early childhood staff can work productively through the challenges of achieving gender equity in a culturally and ethnically diverse country such as Australia. The booklet presents three common equity dilemmas and, through guiding questions, invites reflections upon the gender equity and multicultural issues involved. The booklet discusses the reasons these dilemmas occur, including assumptions of consensus that homogenize the culture and the problem of cultural entrapment. The booklet presents suggestions for overcoming the assumptions that gender issues are a problem only for non-Anglo-Australian cultures, including seeking gender/culture connections, examining how these connections are presented to children, focusing on showing children the breadth and complexity of different ways in which gender is constructed, and recognizing gender problems in all cultures. The booklet also discusses ways early childhood practitioners can work respectfully with parents across cultural boundaries. The booklet concludes with the statement that working on gender issues within and between cultures can enrich practitioners' lives and their professional work with children. (Contains 31 references.) (KB)

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Saris & Skirts

Gender equity and multiculturalism

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By Glenda MacNaughton

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Saris & Skirts

Gender equity and multiculturalism

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About the Author

Glenda MacNaughton has worked in the early childhood field for nearly 28 years and is currently Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne. She has also worked in early childhood as a practitioner, a manager, and as a senior policy advisor to government in the UK and Australia. Glenda has a passionate interest in social justice and has published internationally on these issues. Her two most recent books deal with approaches to teaching in early childhood and communication in early childhood services. She is currently researching how gender, class, and race intersect and construct young children's learning.

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Cultural Diversity and Gender Equity

The AECA policy on cultural diversity is based on the following understandings of the term 'culture':

- *Culture is learned in families and communities, belongs to groups of people, and is a shared way of doing, believing, and knowing.*
- *Everyone has a culture; it is dynamic and influences the ways people meet their material and non-material needs.*
- *Language is a vital element of culture.*

Australia is a culturally diverse society; it is composed of people with different languages, beliefs and values. Staff working in children's services have the potential to impact on children's developing attitudes towards cultural diversity more than any other people in a child's life. It is essential that child care and early childhood teacher competencies reflect understanding of and respect for cultural diversity.

Gender equity aims to develop every individual to his or her full potential. It is imperative that the community's awareness of the educational needs of both boys and girls is raised, because gender specific behaviour and attitudes can limit a child's future development at a very young age. Gender is a social construction which can vary across cultures, class, location, and time.

Girls and boys should have equal access to and be encouraged to participate in all areas of early childhood programs.

(Extracts from AECA's Policies and Working Positions 1997, Cultural Diversity and Gender Equity Sections).

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Gender equity and multiculturalism

It doesn't really matter who you are. What matters is that you are human. People should take you for what you are.
(Previn Atik, aged 13, from Turkey).

As a woman my country is the whole world.
(Virginia Woolf).

Virginia Woolf and Previn Atik are from different times, different cultures and of different ages. Yet they share a common belief that women can and should have a strong and valued place in their society. This belief underpins much current early childhood policy and practice including the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS), Principle 3 (NCAC, 1993) and the Australian Early Childhood Association Code of Ethics on respecting equity and diversity (Stonehouse, 1999).

However, achieving gender equity in a culturally and ethnically diverse country, such as Australia, has its challenges. This book is about how early childhood staff can work productively through these challenges with young children and their parents. It invites staff to reflect on how they are currently managing gender equity in multicultural contexts and it offers practical advice about furthering such work.

Beginning reflections

The following 'equity dilemmas' point to some of the challenges early childhood staff have met in implementing gender equity in multicultural contexts. The questions that follow each dilemma invite you to reflect on how you might negotiate the gender equity and multicultural issues involved.

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Table 1: Equity dilemmas

Dilemma 1: That's women's work

It is mid-morning in the three- to five-year-old room of a child care centre.

The staff have a policy that all children should share in packing away the play materials and setting up for lunch. An Australian-Turkish boy in the group, Abdul, consistently refused to participate. He told the workers that he wouldn't help because it was 'women's work' and 'in my house men do not do pack away'. The workers do not know what to do for the best. Should Abdul be allowed not to participate? Should they alter the packing away routine? Should they insist Abdul participate?

- What is the equity dilemma that the workers are facing?
- What would you do? Why?
- What would you do if Abdul were Anglo-Australian? Would it make any difference? Why? Why not?
- What is most important to you in this situation?

Dilemma 2: Not my son!

It is late afternoon in the two-year-old room of a child care centre. Two Pakistani boys (Mahmood and Nigat) are in the home corner. They have each dressed up in pink frilly ballerina skirts and have lots of bangles and necklaces on. Mahmood is pretending to bath a doll. Nigat is pretending to wash dishes. Mahmood's parents arrive. His father is extremely angry at the clothes his son is wearing and the fact that he is playing with a girl's toy. Mahmood's mother makes no comment. The staff are uncertain as to what to do. Mahmood leaves with his parents. A few moments later Nigat's mother arrives. She is delighted to see that her son is learning to be helpful in the home.

- What is the equity dilemma that the workers are facing?
- What would you do? Why?
- What would you do if Mahmood were Anglo-Australian? Would it make any difference? Why? Why not?
- What is most important to you in this situation?

Dilemma 3: Your pants are showing

Maria is four years old. She is very physically agile for her age. One of her favourite activities is climbing. It is late afternoon and she is on the climbing frame. She is very excited because she has just learned to hang upside down. She is practising so that she can show her father when he collects her. Her father (second generation Italian) arrives, watches Maria's new achievement and is horrified because her skirt falls over her head and her underpants are visible to all. He believes the staff are encouraging her to be very immodest and insists that she not be allowed to do this again.

- What is the equity dilemma that the workers are facing?
- What would you do? Why?
- What would you do if Maria were Anglo-Australian? Would it make any difference? Why? Why not?
- What is most important to you in this situation?

Why dilemmas occur

The three dilemmas presented are not uncommon. Some people believe that these dilemmas are the inevitable outcome of a clash of cultures between Western and 'other' cultures about gender equity. Some argue that gender equity is a white, middle-class concern and that Anglo-Australians are imposing their ideas on others when they insist on gender equity.

These beliefs are misguided and potentially harmful. They are misguided because they assume a consensus over gender equity values, where consensus cannot and should not be assumed (Pettman, 1988). They also assume gender is a problem in 'other' cultures, not 'ours', which is potentially harmful because it produces cultural entrapment.

Assuming consensus: The problems of homogenisation

When we assume a consensus exists of gender equity values in a culture we effectively 'homogenise' that culture. To homogenise milk is to:

> *... treat (milk) so that the fat droplets are emulsified and the cream does not separate* (Allen, 1990, p. 565).

To homogenise gender is to treat all cultural groups as if the same gender goals do, can and should apply to all children, irrespective of their particular ethnic or cultural heritage. Yet, as Benisom (1992, p. 9) forcefully reminded us:

> *Feminist theorists have exploded the idea of a common culture. For example, Iris Young (1990) calls attention to the ideal of commonality as a totalising force that gives rise to racism, ethnic chauvinism, class devaluation, homophobia, sexism.*

We in early childhood need to understand the different ways in which gender relations are 'done' within and between different cultural groups. For instance, we need to see that not all Anglo-Australians 'do' gender in the same way and that not all Indian-Australians 'do' gender in the same way. Some Anglo-Australian women wear skirts, some do not. Some Indian-Australian women wear saris, some do not. Moreover, we need to acknowledge that these differences *within* cultures are just as normal as differences and similarities *between* cultures.

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Cultural entrapment and 'other' cultures as the problem

If we cannot see these differences we are in danger of what Ralph Pettman calls cultural entrapment.

Pettman argues that seeing 'other' cultures as having the problem with gender is problematic as it is:

> *... based on deterministic notions of culture, which constitute 'the other' who is not 'us' in essentialist ways. They construct categories [such as Muslim women or Turkish men] that exclude or entrap whole groups of people, and construct differences in value or entitlement in society (p. 18).*

Such 'entrapment' can be seen in early childhood settings when Anglo-Australian workers say things such as, 'Turkish fathers don't like their boys to play with dolls' or 'Greek boys always get their own way at home'. These comments make gender equity problems 'theirs' not 'ours' and deny the problematic and sexist nature of Anglo-Australian society. For instance, many Anglo-Australian fathers don't like their boys to play with dolls, but this is seen as them just being 'typical dads' wanting 'real little Aussie boys'. What 'Anglo-Australians' do is natural and normal, what 'others' do is inherently sexist and problematic. These understandings are fundamentally racist because they prejudge the 'other' as the problem. This approach to understanding gender relations in multicultural contexts is known as alterity.

Pettman (1988) suggested that we fall into this tendency to cultural entrapment when we make assumptions firstly about what is 'authentic' and/or 'traditional' within a particular culture and then that this is the dominant attitude or value throughout that culture. For instance, when a person assumes that all Muslim women believe in being veiled in public, or that all Latino men believe in 'machismo', they homogenise the ' ... different experiences, identities and social interests ... ' (Pettman, 1988, p. 18) of individuals and groups within each culture. These ideas assume that cultures cannot and do not change in response to changing circumstances. This is both simplistic and inaccurate. All cultures are dynamic because there is always conflict over core social values and relationships.

Table 2: Gender equity in diverse cultures

There is no-one in the world who is not educable; and there is no-one whom we can afford not to educate; why be neglectful only in regard to girls? [Chinese scholar Chen Hung-Mou, eighteenth century. (Bhasin & Khan, 1986, p. 5)]

What it meant to be a 'real man' in seventeenth century France (at least amongst the upper classes)—high-heeled patent leather shoes, red velvet jackets covering frilly lace shirts, lots of rouge and white powder make-up [does not] … bear much resemblance to the mean of masculintiy … today. (Kimmler & Messnes, 1998, p. xx)

The revolution will have to start in our home, by achieving equal rights for women [Jui Jin (1857-1907) Chinese scholar (Bhasin & Khan, 1986, p. 5).]

Every girl should have the freedom and opportunity to do and be what she wants to do and is capable of doing. Because she is born a girl, dolls and pots and pans shouldn't naturally be her only toys; nor should she be shoved into dresses which don't allow her limbs to move … (Bhasin & Khan, 1986, p. 12)

As men growing up in Protestant cultures it is often difficult to acknowledge our needs for others, for it is easy to feel that we will be overwhelmed if we 'give in' to emotions we have so long denied. (Seidler, 1997, p.44)

We women have very strong feet. We can do anything [Eritrean woman, Commander of a Company, 1993. (Jameson, 1993, p. 3)]

That woman is man's equal—was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognised as such [Declaration of Rights for Women, Philadelphia 4th July, 1876. (Tuttle, 1986, p. 77)]

… Woman's education must … be planned in relation to men. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in children, to tend him in his manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of women for all times, and this is what she should be taught when she is young [Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1762. (Herbert, 1992, p. 34)]

From the mid-1980s, colourful campaigns were launched, such as the petition to put pressure on the government to apply the United Nations Convention of Non-discrimination against women; the campaign to raise public awareness of domestic violence against women; the Purple Needles campaign against sexual harassment in the street and at the workplace. From 1989 onwards, efforts have been concentrated on creating shelters for battered women and other feminist initiatives [Turkish Women's Movement, 1992. (Tekeli, S. 1992, p. 140)]

Despite singular examples of successful males in electoral politics, business, labor unions, and the professions, the overwhelming majority of Black men find it difficult to acquire self-confidence and self-esteem within the chaos of modern economic and social life … But Black men must understand that they, too, must overcome their own inherent and deeply ingrained sexism … (Marable, 1998, p.24)

I found that the majority of sexual/physical assaults against … women are not reported. Most women are terrified of the police interrogation where anything from a woman's sexual history to whether she is a fit mother or not is brought out into the open. Reporting an assault sometimes seems to be just as traumatic as the actual assault [Queensland Office of Aboriginal Women, 1993. (International Women's Development Agency, p. 2)]

Women have the right to life, liberty, dignity, freedom of movement and security of person. Women have the right to determine their lives according to their own aspirations. [Women's Action Forum, Pakistan, 1992]

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How can we move forward? We can:

- look for the gender culture connections;
- rethink how we present these connections to children;
- focus on showing children the breadth and complexity of the different ways in which gender is "done" within and between cultures;
- recognise the gender problematic in all cultures.

Cultural dynamism and gender

Many feminists (e.g. Hooks, 1995; Said Khan, 1992) have shown that there has been considerable conflict over gender relations in many cultures over time. This has led to strong and active feminist political groups in many diverse cultures and countries. It has also led to changing understandings within cultures about how gender relations should be practised. Consider the diverse sources for the statements in Table 2 about gender equity for women and the cultural dynamism within them.

Moving forward

Those Anglo-Australians who continue to assume that gender issues are a problem in 'other' Australian cultures open themselves to criticisms that understandings of culture are trivial and depoliticised (Pettman, 1988).

To overcome these difficulties we shall now look at each of these suggestions in turn.

Seeking gender/culture connections

The first way to overcome seeing culture and gender issues in trivial and depoliticised ways is to understand the connections between gender and culture. There is not a simple relationship between our gender identity and our ethnic identity. Gender identity and 'racial'/ethnic identity are dynamic and mutually-constitutive (Walby, 1992). Each identity is constantly in the process of forming; each identity informs and forms

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the other. In other words, a girl is always in the process of learning what it means to be a girl, because we are always in the process of forming and re-forming our gender identity. The same is true of our ethnic identity. How she learns to be a girl and what she learns about being a girl is informed by her ethnicity and vice-versa. Our ethnic identity is formed and informed by our gender.

In our work with children we need to confirm this inter-relationship and to explore it when we discuss cultures with young children. So, for instance, as children learn about Greek-Australian culture they need to learn about how being Greek-Australian is informed by, and forms, gender identities for Greek-Australians.

As Hampel put it, 'gender analysis must accompany cultural explanation' (1993, p. 41). To talk of culture without acknowledging the specific ways in which gender is part of our culture and our cultural identity is increasingly seen as simplistic and inaccurate (Walby, 1992).

Research (e.g. Alloway, 1995; MacNaughton, 1995) shows that children's play and relationships with each other are fundamentally gendered. For instance, by three years of age both boys and girls have developed very fixed and limited ideas about the roles of men and women and, by five years of age, both girls and boys think that the female role is less valued and valuable than is the male role. One five-year-old girl told me recently that, when men go to work, they 'do all the important things but women are just mums'.

Australian research also indicates that many Australian boys from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds prefer to behave in ways associated traditionally with the male role, including being more aggressive and less respectful of authority than are girls. The boys are also learning to reject qualities they had learnt to associate with the female role, such as being caring and being gentle (e.g. Davies, 1989; MacNaughton, 1995). These complex connections between gender and culture create specific challenges for early childhood staff working for gender equity in multicultural contexts.

One five-year-old girl told me recently that, when men go to work, they 'do all the important things but women are just mums'.

Rethinking approaches to managing gender/culture connections

To date we have approached the intersection between gender equity and multiculturalism in three ways:

- Gender tokenism
- Gender homogeneity (sameness)
- Alterity ('otherness').

(MacNaughton, 1998)

Table 3 defines each of these approaches and summarises their implications for curriculum practice.

Table 3: Approaches to gender in multicultural early childhood contexts

Approach	Definition and curriculum implications
Gender tokenism	Tokenism—the superficial recognition that an issue exists but the expenditure of only minimal effort to try to resolve it. Gender is recognised as an issue but only minimal time or effort is given to exploring why it is an issue or how it might influence teaching within a multicultural curriculum.
Gender homogeneity (sameness)	To homogenise gender is to treat all cultural groups as if the same gender goals do, can, and should apply to all children, irrespective of their particular ethnic or cultural heritage. There will be no awareness of possible dilemmas or challenges involved in implementing the same gender equity goals for all cultural groups.
Alterity (otherness)	Alterity is the process of making others different, seeing them as 'other' than yourself. In relation to gender in multicultural contexts, alterity involves treating 'other' cultural groups as if they are the ones who have difficulty with gender equity. It will be assumed that 'other' cultures may find gender equity problematic and it will be stated or strongly implied that there is need to be aware of this potential conflict. This may or may not include discussion of how to resolve the dilemmas involved. By implication, gender is normalised and naturalised in the dominant culture (Pettman, 1992), thus presenting the dominant culture as gender-neutral.

Each of these approaches has it problems. We have discussed the problems in homogenisation and alterity earlier. In brief, they lead to cultural entrapment. Tokenism also has its problems. As an approach to social justice issues it has been widely discredited by several writers in early childhood (e.g. Dermon-Sparks, 1989; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994) and beyond (e.g. McConnochie, Hollingsworth & Pettman, 1988). It has been discredited because actions and policies based on tokenism are superficial, minimalist and rarely followed through and, therefore, do not lead to any real change in relations of inequality.

For instance, using one picture to represent Vietnamese-Australian families in a display of Australian family diversity would be tokenistic because it would be superficial and minimalist. It could not and would not convey the diversity and complexity of the family lives of Vietnamese-Australians. So it would not add any depth to children's understandings of them. Instead, it could reinforce their pre-existing stereotypes by suggesting that all Vietnamese-Australian families live as depicted in the picture.

When children are presented with a single image, story or learning experience to expand their understandings of gender in a multicultural context, they cannot develop the necessary depth of knowledge or complexity of understanding. How can they learn that there are just as many ways to be a Vietnamese-Australian girl as there are to be an Anglo-Australian girl, if only superficial or minimum time is spent exploring gender in multicultural contexts?

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Guiding principles

- Tokenism can be replaced with depth, breadth, and complexity in how we talk with children about gender in multicultural contexts.
- Homogeneity can be replaced with information for children about the multiple ways in which gender and culture are 'done' by people, including the dilemmas this brings.
- Alterity can be replaced with information that gender is problematic in all cultures and not just in non Anglo Australian cultures.

Ways forward

There are no magic answers about how to work on the complexities of gender equity in multicultural contexts. However, there are some broad principles that arise from the difficulties within our current approaches that can guide us in our work.

Such shifts should lead us away from the racism inherent in current approaches and towards an anti-racist approach to gender equity in multicultural contexts.

Our future approaches to gender equity in multicultural contexts, therefore, need to show the children:

- gender depth, breadth, and complexity;
- gender multiplicity;
- gender problematics in all cultures.

Benisom (1992) argued that feminism and multiculturalism share three common concerns/projects that can help staff achieve the above goals. They are:

- the desire to move differences from the margin to the centre;
- the concern to recover silenced histories, lifestyles, etc.;
- the exposure of oppressive, non-democratic practices.

Each of these goals can be translated into teaching and learning strategies that can help us to inject greater complexity, breadth, and depth into our work with children.

Moving the margins to the centre

To achieve this goal, teaching and learning about gender in multicultural contexts could focus on:

- the differences within cultures about how to 'do' gender through stories, posters, and small discussion groups;
- using learning resources and experiences that encourage children to learn about these differences and which avoid tokenism;
- helping children to think critically about their own and others' culture and gender and how each forms and informs identity through conversations and stories;

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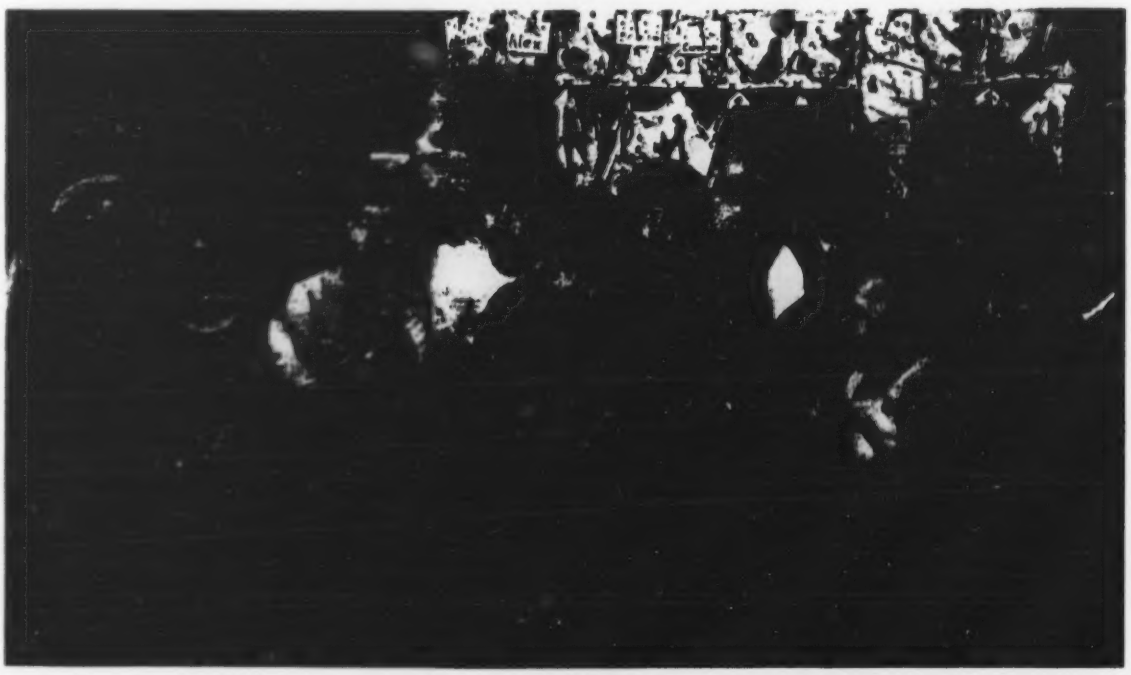
- encouraging children to learn about the complexities of who we are rather than about superficial tokens of culture, such as what we eat with or what dances we do, through stories, images, and discussion.

Recovering silenced histories, lifestyles, etc.

To achieve this goal, teaching and learning about gender in multicultural contexts could focus on:

- children learning about gender and culture histories and lifestyles that are not normally found within mainstream texts, stories, and curriculum materials. For instance, staff could actively learn about and encourage children to seek the histories and lifestyles of women from a diversity of culture backgrounds who were public achievers, heroines, adventurers, and rebels;
- children learning that particular ways of 'doing' gender vary in cultures across time through stories and discussions;
- exploring not only the cultural specificity of gender and identity but also their cultural dynamism.



Doing gender: Changes across time and cultures

You can teach children that:

> *... in China, it once was the fashion for affluent men to grow long fingernails. Or that men once wore wigs, curls, ruffles, and silk stockings. Or that, in the sixteenth century, only men wore high heels. Or that women in history have led men into battle. Or that in the agrarian society before the Industrial Revolution, men were mostly at home on family farms and participated more in the raising of their children (Hoy Crawford, 1996, p. 123).*

Doing gender: Famous women

Hoy Crawford (1996, p. 193) has published an extensive list of what she calls 'Famous Women in History' that details the accomplishments through history of women from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Staff and parents can research these and share their stories with the children.

Cameos of famous women: A start

Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) was a Mexican painter who achieved international renown. She triumphed over

physical injury and chronic pain to gain recognition as one of Latin America's finest painters with works of sometimes brutal honesty and self-evaluation (Steinberger, 1991).

Sarah Winnemucca (1844–1891) was a Native American who fought for her people's rights. She acted as a translator, negotiator, and advocate for the rights of Native Americans with the US Army. Her achievements included the establishment of a school for Native American children.

Helen Caldicott (b. 1938) is an Anglo-Australian anti-nuclear activist and paediatrician who has campaigned actively to educate the world about the impacts of radiation on children.

Indira Ghandi (1917–1984) was a key Indian politician who became leader of the world's largest democracy for nearly 22 years.

Valentina Tereshkova (b. 1937) was a Russian cosmonaut who was the first women in space (1963) and holds the world record for the longest time spent in space by a woman.

Marie Curie (1867–1934) was a Polish scientist who won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1903 with her husband. She became the first person to win two Nobel Prizes. Each was for her work on the properties of radium.

Exposing oppressive, non-democratic practices

To achieve this goal, teaching and learning about gender in multicultural contexts could focus on:

- children learning about fairness and unfairness such as racism and sexism, and how to recognise these forms of unfairness in their relationships with each other and in the texts they learn from;
- providing children with the intellectual and emotional skills to help them confront both sexism and racism in their daily lives.

Working with parents

Our stereotypes of other cultures often pick up on aspects of traditional culture and often oversimplify it. In particular, they tend to ignore the ideas that:

- gender roles for both women and men are highly contested in many cultures;
- notions about women's and men's roles and responsibilities are changing—stereotypes assume they are frozen in time.

When working with parents from a culture different from your own, try to understand that in their culture, like your own, there will be a variety of opinions on women's rights and gender equity.

When working with parents from a culture different from your own, try to understand that in their culture, like your own, there will be a variety of opinions on women's rights and gender equity. Think about where you stand on these issues such as women's rights and gender equity and where the individual parents you meet stand. Once you understand points of difference and similarities, you can begin to balance your professional goals with parental values and to negotiate this balance with parents. The following quotes illustrate how this balance and negotiation might be approached. The accompanying questions invite you to reflect on how you might achieve a negotiated balance with parents.

To the boy who says, 'My daddy don't want me to play with dolls 'cause that's sissy', we can easily respond, 'I bet your father loved you when you were a baby just as he loves you now. Pretending the doll is your baby is really pretending you are a grown man who can be

a daddy'. And we can casually tell the father what we've said without demanding an attitudinal change on his part (West, 1992, p. 130).

I worked in a centre that believed that children should get dirty and be little scientists—it had a wonderful adventure playground. Parents, particularly Black parents, would say, 'We don't want our kids going outside. We spend an hour-and-a-half on their hair. Two minutes later they are covered with sand. We can't get that stuff out, and we spend our whole evening cleaning it up. So we don't want our kids going outside.' For a while, our earnest and empathic response was, 'Gee, that is too bad. But this is really good for the children'. Of course, our knowing response implied 'you poor, ignorant person, valuing appearance over good child development'. Conflict continued and we learned. Now the response to these sorts of issues is, ' Okay, let's figure this out. Obviously it's important to you how your child looks. And you know it's very good for these children to have these sorts of experiences. Let's come up with a solution'. The assumption is two legitimate points of view—let's work it out together. In this instance, the answer was shower caps for the children (Greenman, 1992, p. 144).

Questions for reflection

- Do you agree with the action taken?
- Why? Why not?
- Would your decision be the same irrespective of the ethnic background of the parent?
- Are these suitable ways to handle all equity dilemmas you might encounter?

If you face similar dilemmas, these principles for action should help.

Working respectfully with parents across cultural boundaries

- Develop clear policies.
- Recognise that there may be conflict.
- Try to work out principles for problem-solving in your centre in advance.

Diversity is the spice of life. It also makes us sneeze a lot. If we believe in diversity, we have to take the time to think it through in our program

(Greenman, 1992, p. 145).

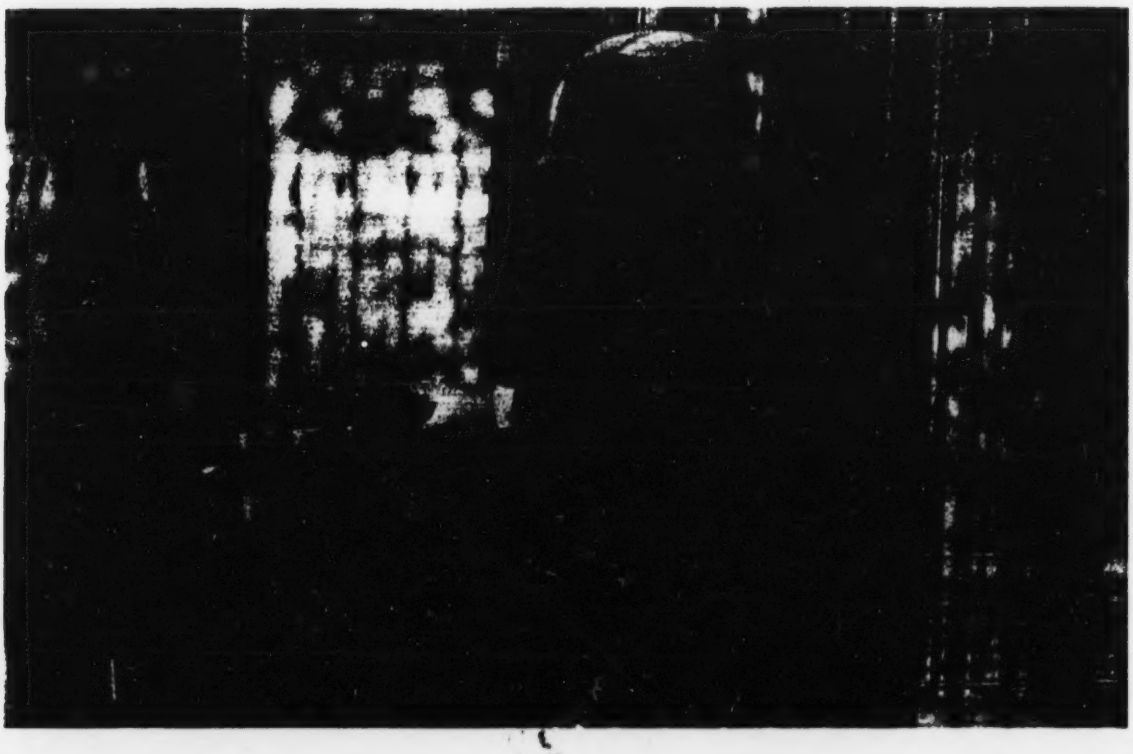
- Develop general guidelines that all staff and parents know about and agree with.
- Decide with other staff what you can and cannot compromise on in your work with children.
- Spend time discussing as well as explaining centre policies with parents

On the basis of your reflections to date, can you add to them?

[For further advice on working with parents across cultural boundaries see Hughes & MacNaughton, 1999.]

And finally ...

Working on issues of gender within and between cultures may make us 'sneeze a lot'. But it can also enrich our own lives and our professional work with children, as we learn about the diverse and rich ways in which people live their lives as gendered beings. It is important that we take time to do the learning and to implement what we have learned into our programs, thoughtfully and respectfully. If we do, we can play our part in creating more equitable and enriching lives for the children we work with and for.



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